Discontinuance of route dispersal guidelines

561. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that regional airlines are being encouraged to improve connectivity to small cities;

(b) if so, the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard;

(c) whether there is any plan to discontinue Government's policy of route dispersal;

(d) if so, the details thereof including the arrangement to provide connectivity to uneconomic routes; and

(e) the role envisaged for the National Carrier 'Indian' in the growing regionalisation of aviation sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Some concessions in terms of lower taxes on ATF and lower landing/parking charges have been given for operations of smaller aircraft, which are mostly operated on regional routes.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The national carrier, Indian will continue to play an important role in making available safe, reliable, efficient and affordable air transport services to connect large and small cities as well as far-flung States and Union Territories of country. Aliance Air, a subsidiary of Indian operates 86 flights per week providing connectivity to 11 destinations in the North Eastern Region.

Growth rate of passengers

562. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the growth rate of air passengers, air cargo and airlines operations in the non-metro cities in Tamil Nadu; and

(b) what steps have been taken to gear-up the airport authorities and the airlines to meet the growth rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The growth rate of air passengers, air cargo and airlines operations in the non-metro airports in Tamil Nadu in 2005-06 are: 46.7%, 11.4% and 31.1% at Coimbatore; 12.8%, 114.8% and 23.6% at Trichy; and 12.9%, 15.9% and 0.9% at Madurai Airport.

(b) Various development works have been taken up by Airports Authority of India (AAI) to meet the growth rate of air passengers, air cargo and airlines operations in non-metro airports in Tamil Nadu.

Works related to extension and strengthening of runway is completed; expansion and strengthening of apron is expected to be completed by December, 2006 and there is also proposals for expansion and modification of existing terminal building construction of a new integrated terminal building complex and expansion of existing cargo complex with associated apron at Coimbatore airport.

Works is in progress for extension and strengthening of runway, construction of isolation bays, new fire station, construction of new integrated terminal building with all modern facilities including two aero bridges alongwith expansion of apron and link taxiway at Trichy airport.

Work is in progress for extension and strengthening of runway alongwith expansion of apron, additional link taxiway, isolation bay, installation of ILS on runway 27 at Madurai airport. There is also a proposal for construction of a new integrated terminal building with all modern amenities including installation of two aerobridges.

At Tuticorin airport, Government of Tamil Nadu has been requested to aquire 690 acres of land and handover to AAI free of cost and free from all incumbrances for extension of runway.

Purchase of aircrafts equipped with CAT-III B system

563. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of airports in the country which are equipped with CAT-II System for assisting planes to land at fog hit airports;

(b) whether pilots of Indian and Air India have been trained to operate the flights during foggy weather using CAT-II system;